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RELATIONS BETWEEN
THE VERMONT SEPARATISTS
AND GREAT BRITAIN,
1789-1791

CONTRIBUTED BY
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DOCUMENTS

Relations between the Vermont Separatists and Great Britain, 1789-1791

THE intrigues of the Vermont Separatists savor of the type of conspiracy so prominent in the West before the acquisition of Louisiana. In fact, the geographical positions of Vermont and of the Kentucky country were in one respect very similar. Both regions were so situated that it was easier for the inhabitants to float their products out by means of inland navigation systems through the northeastern and southwestern frontiers, respectively, than to send them out over the difficult land routes to the harbors of the eastern coast states. The position of Vermont in this respect closely resembles the relation of the Kentucky and Tennessee settlements to the closure of the Mississippi navigation, and was productive of much the same results; for while the Western citizens of the Ohio Valley were demanding the free navigation of the river, and while their delegations to the Virginia ratifying convention hesitated to consent to the adoption of a new Constitution that would give control of navigation and commerce to a remote central government, that had not been over-careful of their rights to the New Orleans outlet, a strong party in the Sovereign State of Vermont was against joining the Union, and favored an alliance with Great Britain, or even return to British rule.

That Vermont was to a great degree dependent on the Champlain system appealed to many men in that state as a strong argument for seeking the protection of Great Britain rather than joining the new Union and accepting a part of its debt. Forming a natural highway from points almost as far south as the head of navigation of the Hudson, the Champlain system offered easy communication between Quebec and northwestern New England, together with those adjacent counties of New York, extending as far as Lake Ontario, which were claimed by Vermont under the old New Hampshire grants. Other things being equal, it was less laborious and cheaper for the inhabitants of this country to send out their produce and to receive their importations by way of Lake Champlain and the Sorel River than to carry them to and fro over the rough roads to the Atlantic Coast. If commercial concessions

were offered or to be had, the temptation for a Canadian connection was all the stronger.

The Allen brothers, Ethan, Ira, and Levi, were the most active and versatile of the separatist party, and their negotiations with Canadian and English officials form a story that is yet to be treated. The documents on which it must be founded, and from which a selection is here presented, are preserved among the Colonial Office Papers in the British Public Record Office. Transcripts of most of them are in the Canadian Archives at Ottawa, series Q. The references below, to one or other of these repositories, merely indicate the one in which the present inquirer found a particular document.¹

Immediately after the preliminary articles of peace had become known, several "persons of influence" from Vermont visited General Haldimand at Quebec, at different times. They represented their state as being strongly opposed to joining the Confederation, even though Congress complied with the condition, which had been advanced, that the new state should be exempt from any part of the debt of the United States contracted before the date of admission. They encouraged the settlement of royalists, and candidly and confidentially told Haldimand that Vermont must either become annexed to Canada or become mistress of it, as it was the only channel by which their produce could be marketed. They assured him that they preferred annexation. Haldimand, who, unlike some later Canadian governors, lacked initiative for petty intrigue, told them plainly that he could not interfere, and that he had positive orders to do everything possible to conciliate the affections of the subjects of the United States and those of Great Britain.² When Lord Sydney, then directing colonial affairs, received this news, he commented on it as extraordinary, but thought that it would not be consistent with the treaty to interfere "openly" in the disputes of the people of Vermont, though it would "be difficult to refuse to take them under our protection should they determine to become subjects of Great Britain". Haldimand must use his discretion, but should take no step without first notifying the home government.³

Through the year 1784 little was heard at Quebec from the

¹ The contributor being in Europe at the time of the final preparation of this material for the press, some of the annotations have been added, without ability to consult him, by the managing editor.

² Haldimand to North, Quebec, October 24, 1783, Canadian Archives, Q. 22: 85.

³ Sydney to Haldimand, Whitehall, April 8, 1784, Can. Arch., Q. 23: 55. Sydney was home secretary from December, 1783, to June, 1789.

Vermont separatists, and a formal demand by Governor Chittenden for the delivery of the British posts at Pointe-au-Fer and Dutchman's Point was refused. It was supposed that they were turning their attention more to Congress.⁴ The matter of connections with Canada had not been forgotten, however; for Ira Allen turned up in Quebec in the spring of 1785 with a commission from the governor of Vermont⁵ to negotiate for free trade between that state and the British provinces. Hamilton, then acting governor, sent Allen back with an indefinite answer.⁶ The governor's council declined to interfere on the ground that a royal order-in-council regulated all commerce. The request was forwarded to Whitehall.⁷

A memorial for free commercial privileges with Canada, with the same freedom as to the trade with the British West Indies and England in British vessels, was presented by Ira Allen to Dorchester late in 1786, and met with partial success. The governor's council, or "Council of State", this time saw fit to open up a trade by way of Lake Champlain, with the "neighboring states" to the province of Quebec. Free importation of lumber, naval stores, hemp, flax, grain, provisions, livestock, and all products grown in those states was allowed, and all British products excepting furs and peltries might be exported into them from Canada without payment of duties.⁸ The ministry afterward confirmed the action of the Canadian authorities, allowing Dorchester to direct the passage of such laws as were deemed expedient for regulating trade with Vermont, but not by this means to permit the importation of foreign goods, or the exportation of furs. A commercial treaty, which Allen had petitioned for, was impossible, said Lord Sydney.⁹

While Ira Allen had been negotiating for commercial privileges, his brother Levi had endeavored to secure a contract for supplying the British navy with masts, at prices paid at Portsmouth, N. H.,

⁴ Chittenden to Haldimand, Arlington, Vt., April 15, 1784, Can. Arch., Q. 23: 78. Haldimand to North, Quebec, May 12, 1784, Can. Arch., Q. 23: 161.

⁵ Act by the state of Vermont for the purpose of opening up free trade to and through the province of Quebec, with a resolution to appoint Ira Allen, Major Joseph Fay, and Hon. Jonas Fay commissioners for that purpose. Rutland, Vt., October 29, 1784. The act is in Slade, *Vermont State Papers*, p. 496; both act and resolution are in *Records of the Governor and Council of the State of Vermont*, III. 397-398. The Council, October 26, 1786, substituted Levi Allen for Joseph Fay, resigned; *ibid.*, 399.

⁶ Hamilton to Sydney, Quebec, April 7, 1785, Can. Arch., Q. 24: 282. Ira Allen's report, June 7, 1785, to the General Assembly, is in *Records of Governor and Council*, III. 398.

⁷ Extract from the minutes of the Council of State, Quebec, March 24, 28, 1785, Can. Arch., Q. 24: 450.

⁸ Memorial of Levi Allen, November 22, 1786, Can. Arch., Q. 28: 7. Proclamation of Dorchester, April 18, 1787, in *Records of Governor and Council*, III. 402. Ordinance of governor and council of Canada, April 30, 1787, *ibid.*, III. 403. Dorchester to Sydney, Quebec, June 18, 1787, Can. Arch., Q. 28: 4.

⁹ Sydney to Dorchester, Whitehall, September 14, 1787, Can. Arch., Q. 28: 28.

before the war.¹⁰ This offer, transmitted to the British naval authorities, does not appear to have had any further consequences.¹¹

Another petition from Vermont was brought to Quebec by Levi Allen late in 1787, asking permission to export produce from Canada in British bottoms on the same terms as those enjoyed by British subjects. There is no record of this request being granted.¹² The next summer his brother Ethan presented to Dorchester a long memorial, dated at Quebec, which is notable for the way in which this hero of Ticonderoga chaffered for British trading concessions and for supplies of arms in case of a rebellion against Congress, and indicated the willingness of Vermont to come under British dominion again. It is interesting to observe that this was presented to the governor of Canada within a few months from the time when Wilkinson forwarded a similar communication to the Spanish governor at New Orleans, for similar purposes, and with a similar though perhaps more selfish motive.¹³ Ethan Allen asserted that Vermont had 15,000 men, and would resist aggression on the part of the United States and any attempts to subjugate it.

Vermont is locally situated to the waters of Lake Champlain, which connect with those of the St. Lawrence, and contiguous to the Province of Quebec, where they must be dependent for trade, business and intercourse, which naturally incline them to the British interest—in the time of General Haldimand's command, could Great Britain have afforded Vermont protection, they would have readily yielded up their independence and have become a Province of Great Britain, and should the United States attempt a conquest of them, they would, I presume, do the same, should the British policy harmonize with it. For the leading men in Vermont are not sentimentally attached to a republican form of government, yet from political principles are determined to maintain their present mode of it, till they can have a better, and expect to be able to do it, at least, so long as the United States will be able to maintain theirs, or until they can on principles of mutual interest and advantage return to the British government, without war or annoyance from the United States.¹⁴

Sydney acted with caution, upon receiving from Dorchester a copy of this letter, and replied that nothing could be done until the

¹⁰ Levi Allen to Dorchester, Quebec, July 2, 1787, *Can. Arch.*, Q. 28: 107, and Public Record Office, C. O. 42: 11, f. 87.

¹¹ Sydney to Dorchester, November 8, 1787, *Can. Arch.*, Q. 28: 143.

¹² Major Skene to his father, Quebec, December 16, 1787, *Can. Arch.*, Q. 36: 481. But the privileges accorded by the ordinance of April 30, 1787, were enlarged by one of April 14, 1788, of which the text is in the *Vermont Records*, III. 405-406.

¹³ The date of Allen's letter to Dorchester is July 16, 1788; that of Wilkinson to Miró is dated February 12, 1789. Gayarré, *History of Louisiana*, III. 223-240.

¹⁴ Ethan Allen to Dorchester, Quebec, July 16, 1788, *Can. Arch.*, Q. 36: 448. This is calendared by Mr. Brymner, in the *Report on the Archives for 1890*, who makes liberal quotations, pp. 210-211.

reassembling of the ministry.¹⁵ Impatient at this delay, the energetic Allens determined upon a bolder stroke; they resolved that one of them should go to England in person, and there confer directly with the ministry. The story of Levi's voyage to England and of his relations with the Cabinet, the adventures of his ship, and his vain attempt to prevent Vermont from joining the Union, are described in the letters printed below. The first is a formal memorial to the Secretary of State for the Home Department. The second is a reference of the memorial to the Committee of the Privy Council for Trade and Plantations. The report of the committee, made at a time when the Nootka Sound question bade fair to result in war between Spain and Great Britain, and when the ministry was doubtful as to the attitude of the United States, has already been printed in this *Review* by Professor Frederick J. Turner.¹⁶ The committee considered an identical policy to be in many ways applicable to Vermont and Kentucky. A British interest should be fostered for commercial and political reasons in Kentucky; the same interest might be enhanced in Vermont by giving the inhabitants liberal commercial facilities, though the committee did not presume to say whether the hostility of the States ought to be invited by the negotiation of an actual treaty with Vermont, which was recognized by the treaty of 1783 to be within American boundaries.

Allen was kept waiting in London while the business of the Nootka imbroglio proceeded. Grenville soon received information from his informal agent in New York, Major George Beckwith, that the United States would not go to war over the question of the posts, even should Spain and Britain come to grips. This assurance came from Alexander Hamilton, and enabled the Duke of Leeds, the secretary for Foreign Affairs, to discount the veiled threats of Gouverneur Morris, who was at the same time in London as the personal agent of Washington, inquiring as to the disposition of the ministry regarding fulfillment of the stipulations of the treaty of 1783.¹⁷ For this reason it was not necessary to hold out to Allen any favors much greater than those already granted by

¹⁵ Sydney to Dorchester, Whitehall, September 5, 1788, Can. Arch., Q. 38: 1.

¹⁶ "English Policy toward America, 1790-1791", *American Historical Review*, VIII. 78-86, report of April 17, 1790. Cf. (same article, part I.), *id.*, VII. 707.

¹⁷ See Beckwith to Grenville, New York, April 7, 1790, Public Record Office, F. O. 4: 12. Grenville to Dorchester, June 6, 1790, Can. Arch., Q. 44: 161. For Morris's mission, see *American State Papers, Foreign Relations*, I., and J. Sparks, *Life and Letters of Gouverneur Morris*, vol. II., ch. I. See also Manning, "Nootka Sound Controversy", in *American Historical Association Report*, 1906, pp. 417 ff.

the Canadian government, nor to accept the possibility of an alliance with the "Vermontese". The whole intrigue, if it may be called such, was extinguished automatically by the confederation of Vermont to the United States.

Our third document, Levi Allen to Dundas, August 9, 1791, runs parallel to, and supplements, a letter which Colonel Simcoe wrote to the same official a week before, August 2, after conversation with Allen, and which has been printed in the *Report* of the Canadian Archives for 1889.¹⁸ The fourth document is of additional interest in that, like passages in the third and sixth, it shows relations hitherto unknown between Simcoe and General Elijah Clarke, the Georgia backwoodsman, in the period between the latter's first disappointment over President Washington's Creek treaty of 1790, on the one hand, and his relations with Genet in 1793 and trans-Oconee outbreak of 1794.¹⁹ The fifth and sixth documents relate the story of Allen's final disappointment, in a manner to supplement the account which Allen gave Simcoe in a letter dated November 19, 1791, and printed in the *Canadian Archives Report* for 1889.²⁰

The Unionist party gave the governor of Canada considerable anxiety for the safety of the British posts in that state. In 1791 he gave orders to the officers there that any attack must be repelled, and noted with concern the erection of the custom-house at Alburgh, which Levi Allen feared would take fire.²¹ The aggressive attitude of the Unionists toward the British posts was the subject of representations by Hammond, the British minister at Philadelphia, to Jefferson, who took some steps to quiet apprehensions.²² Dorchester's nervousness over the Vermont posts added to his perturbation in 1794, when he made the famous hostile speech to the Indians and ordered Governor Simcoe, of Upper Canada, to build the Miami Fort on American soil, near the present city of Toledo.²³

Ira Allen made a voyage to Europe in 1796, visited England, and petitioned the government for leave to cut a canal between Lake Champlain and the St. Lawrence River.²⁴ While in France

¹⁸ P. 53. Colonel John Graves Simcoe had long since been listed for appointment as the first lieutenant-governor of Upper Canada, though his commission was not issued till September 12, 1791. Read's *Simcoe*, p. 127.

¹⁹ Stevens, *History of Georgia*, II. 404 ff.

²⁰ P. 56.

²¹ Dorchester to Lieut.-Col. Buckeridge, January 17, 1791, Can. Arch., Q. 50: 113. See p. 557, *post*, and note 40.

²² *American State Papers, For. Rel.*, I. 461-463, correspondence between Randolph and Hammond relative to the speech of Lord Dorchester. Also Dorchester to Dundas, Quebec, September 20, 1794, Can. Arch., Q. 70: 64.

²³ Dorchester to Hammond, Quebec, February 17, 1794, Can. Arch., Q. 67: 105.

²⁴ Ira Allen to Portland, London, August 15, 1796, Can. Arch., Q. 77: 339.

he purchased 20,000 stand of arms for the Vermont militia, though the Canadian officials noted that the Vermont militia was legally required to furnish its own arms.²⁵ Allen's shipment was captured by a British warship, it being suspected that they were for the aid of a revolution of the French inhabitants of Lower Canada. The proceedings and correspondence relative to Allen's connection with this plot against British authority are printed in part in the *Report* on the Canadian Archives for 1891,²⁶ and in his *Olive Branch*.

S. F. BEMIS.

I. MEMORIAL OF LEVI ALLEN, MAY 4, 1789.²⁷

*To the Right Honble Lord Sydney,
Principal Secretary of State.*

THE Representative and Memorial of Levi Allen in behalf of the Inhabitants of the New Hampshire Grants, known by the name of Vermont Humbly sheweth,

That your Memorialist is authorized by Commission under the Great Seal of Vermont, pursuant to an Act of the General Assembly thereof, to negotiate a Commercial and Friendly Intercourse between Vermont and His Majesty's Dominions.²⁸

In the first place, your Memorialist begs leave to represent to your Lordship that during the late unhappy Troubles in America, great numbers of His Majesty's faithful subjects from the provinces of New England, New York and New Jersey retired into the District of Vermont in order to avoid being driven into arms against their Sovereign, by the Revolters; these Loyal Emigrants, joining with those in Vermont who adhered to their allegiance, made at least three-fourths of the Inhabitants of that District, and those of the Inhabitants, who in the beginning of the frenzy which unhappily prevailed in America, even for a time opposed to His Majesty's Government, soon saw their error and would have been happy to have been permitted to have returned to their Allegiance long before the end of the war, for which purpose Overtures were made to the Commander-in-chief in Canada early in 1788. this would still be their greatest wish could it be practicable, but being in doubt with respect to its practicability, this part of their wish is not comprehended in the Commission with which your Memorialist is charged. The locality of Vermont, as well as the Disposition of its Inhabitants, renders its connection with Canada the most natural as well as the most advantageous of any, as the waters of Lake Champlain are the principal means by which they can export their produce, or receive their manufactures they stand in need of from this Country, on this account they earnestly hoped to have been incorporated as an appendage

²⁵ *Burlington Mercury*, December 1, 1796, in Prescott's letter to Portland, Quebec, December 17, 1796, Can. Arch., Q. 78: 131, 159, 160.

²⁶ Pp. 63-64, 81-84, of first part. *Records*, III, 413-418.

²⁷ Public Record Office, F. O. 4, vol. 7, and C. O. 42: 12, f. 409.

²⁸ Levi Allen seems to have had no other public authority than his commission under the act of 1784, which conferred powers for exercise in Quebec solely. See his letter to his brother Ira, London, June 25, 1789, printed in the *Vermont Historical Magazine*, I, 572-573, and in *Records*, III, 409.

to the Province of Quebec, but those hopes were defeated by the boundary line of the United States as settled by the late Peace.

Your Memorialist begs leave further to represent to Your Lordship that the number of the Inhabitants of Vermont is computed to be one Hundred and Sixty Thousand Souls,²⁹ and the Country is daily increasing by a rapid Population; their vicinity to Canada and particularly the bordering of Lake Champlain, the principal entrance to that Province from the South, cannot fail, Your Memorialist humbly apprehends, to render their Friendship and Commerce useful and acceptable, and as they are for the most part people who were (and continue to be) loyally disposed, and after being driven on that account into this place of Retreat were finally cut off from His Majesty's Dominions and Government sorely against their wishes, would willingly hope that they might be considered in some degree worthy of His Majesty's Royal Benevolence and Regards.

The Produce of Vermont consists in Lumber, Naval Stores, Corn and Grain of all sorts, Pot and Pearl Ashes, pig and bar Iron, Cattle and Provisions of all kinds, Horses and Mules, Hemp, Flax, Tallow, Bees wax and Honey, with many more articles, which the Inhabitants early wish to be permitted to send to or through the Canadian market, and to receive in exchange such Goods and Manufactures as they have occasion for, In the same manner and subject to the same duties, Imports and Drawbacks as if said District had been part and parcel of His Majesty's Province of Quebec.

Your Memorialist therefore humbly prays that your Lordship would be favorably pleased to take this Memorial into Consideration, and that such free License and Permission may be granted in the Premises, as shall on mature deliberation be found meet.

And your Memorialist will pray for and in behalf of
The Inhabitants of Vermont,

LEVI ALLEN

LONDON, May 4, 1789, N 4 Bridge Row, near Ranelagh

II. GRENVILLE TO THE LORDS OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE PRIVY COUNCIL FOR TRADE AND PLANTATIONS.³⁰

The Lords of the Committee for Trade and Plantations;

My Lords,

I have the honor of enclosing to your Lordships herewith a Memorial delivered to me this day (addressed to my Predecessor in Office) by Mr. Levi Allen in behalf of the Inhabitants of Vermont, setting forth that he has been appointed under the Great Seal of that State pursuant to an Act of the General Assembly to Negotiate a Commercial and friendly intercourse between the said State and His Majesty's Dominions, and proposing certain arrangements in consequence, and I have received His Majesty's Commands, to desire that Your Lordships will take Mr. Allen's proposals into your consideration and acquaint me for His Majesty's information what steps may in Your Lordships' opinion be taken therein.

²⁹ The census of 1790 gave a total population of 85,425.

³⁰ Public Record Office, F. O. 4, vol. 7. The date may be presumed to have been June 13, 1789. Grenville succeeded Sydney as home secretary on June 5.

I enclose a Copy of the Minutes of the Legislature of the State of Vermont, and of the Commission before mentioned.³¹

III. LEVI ALLEN TO HENRY DUNDAS, RANELAGH, AUGUST 9, 1791.³²

Sir;

Since I left Vermont in Janry 1789 the Principal men of Governor Chittenden and Allens Party, Instructed me in addition to the business of the Commercial Treaty I was Honor'd with from Vermont, to assure the British Court that Vermont was from local situation as well as from inclination firmly attached to them, and that whenever Vermont should find it necessary to join Britain or join Congress, they would positively join the former. Indeed Vermont at that time viz. the principal men of Chittenden's and Allen's party was clear for joining Great Britain immediately; in order to which my surviving Brother, Ira Allen, and myself waited on Lord Dorchester at Quebec, about two months before my departure for England, and gave a written proposal for that purpose.

After my arrival in London more than twelve months passed without the least Probability of success; of which I informed my brother Ira, with much reluctance, after receiving several letters from him full of complaints for my unpardonable neglect in not acquainting him with what was doing, and what probability there was of anything being done at the British Court.³³ A short time after, just as I was preparing to embark for America, Col. Simcoe took me by the hand and brought forward the business of Vermont in a very satisfactory manner, of which I lost no time in acquainting Governor Chitenden and Ira Allen at the same time acquainting them I should set out for Liverpool in a few weeks to charter and load a ship with all possible dispatch for William Henry,³⁴ and they would not fail to have a proper cargo prepared at William Henry for the English market on the ship's arrival. Many unavoidable Procrastinations took place in the course of chartering and loading the ship at Liverpool, amongst which the obstructions thrown in my way by the Merchants in this country who supply Canada were not the least, our seamen were impressed³⁵ and a second crew mostly ran away, the latter was owing to some imprudence of the Captain. The contrary winds Prevented getting out of the harbor for a long time, and to complete the unfortunate scene, was drove by a heavy gale of wind from the Banks of Newfoundland within sight of the Azores or Westerly Islands, neither the captain or mate had ever been up the St. Lawrence, and all appeared much afraid to venture, and as a clause in the Charter Party left it optional with the Captain to stop at Quebec he found it unsafe to proceed to William Henry. The captain being an obstinate timmed man, declared if I insisted on his again attempting the St.

³¹ A marginal note here says that these inclosures were not found.

³² Can. Arch., Q. 54: 698, and C. O. 42: 85; summarized in *Report* for 1890, second part, p. 306. Dundas succeeded Grenville as home secretary on June 8, 1791, Grenville on that day becoming foreign secretary.

³³ Grenville meanwhile wrote Dorchester of the importance of having the friendship of Vermont in the event of alarm from the United States. This friendship had been strengthened, he said, by the encouragement already given. For this reason he had encouraged Levi Allen. Grenville to Dorchester, Whitehall, May 6, 1790, Can. Arch., Q. 44: 87.

³⁴ At the head of Lake George.

³⁵ A general press for the Nootka Sound armament occurred on the night of May 4, 1790.

Lawrence he positively would go no farther than Quebec, which would by no means answer my purpose, and the wind still continuing unfavorable we stood for Georgia.³⁶ After arrival I wrote Governor Chittenden and Ira Allen, the misfortune met with, and that I should pay them a visit as soon as the ship was loaded for England, but having to dispose of and purchase a cargo in a place where I had little acquaintance and less *Friends*, and none I could depend upon, the Captain proving to be an obstinate ignorant miserly Brute I deemed it improper to intrust him with the cargo, a dispute arising about demurrage which could not be settled with him, and some bills I had been favored with leave to draw in England would shortly become due, and my credit forever ruined as a *Merchant*, or a man of *Honour*, if the same were not Punctually Paid; In this disagreeable situation I again wrote Governor Chittenden and my Brother, and returned in the ship, Having previously taken two long tours into the back-woods of Georgia to see Genl Clarke, he being absent the first, for the particulars of which I refer you to Col. Simcoe, who has Clarke's letter.³⁷

I shall always be doubly happy to serve this country, for in doing so I shall serve Vermont, whose interests on a proper establishment will be forever mutual, and of course Perminant, the rulers and inhabitants of Canada and Vermont ought to keep up a friendly connection, and I am sorry to have occasion to observe it is not the case at Present, through some little foolish Prejudices that exist between them. Soon after my leaving Vermont my brother Ethan Allen died,³⁸ and before the end of the year, through some private outrages of Congress and New York, and by means of two hundred and thirty votes of Chittenden's Party not arriving in time, the opposition very unexpectedly to Chittenden's *Friends* got Mr. Robinson in Governor, which the other and far the strongest Party, had not the least suspicion of.³⁹ Chittenden had been Governor, and chosen annually from the commencement of the State to that day. During Robinson's reign overtures were made to federal Congress, to admit Vermont into the federal Union. In October Chittenden was again elected Governor by a large majority of votes. Congress finding their friend Robinson, was out of office, and that Vermont was negotiating as a Sovereign State a commercial treaty, with Great Britain in January 1791 Passed a decree allowing Vermont to join the Union and send three members to Congress, and at the same time giving the same liberty to Kentucky, and probably for similar reasons and immediately after Passed a decree to establish a Customs House on Lake Champlain at 45° N. Lat. for the Purpose of making the Vermonters pay the same duty

³⁶ The difficulties of autumnal navigation into the St. Lawrence are illustrated, under date of October 16 in the next year, 1791, by the following passage from Mrs. Simcoe's diary: "It will be so late before we come into the River St. Lawrence that the pilots will probably have quitted the Isle of Bic [their station 108 miles below Quebec]. . . . and the master of the *Triton* cannot carry her up without a pilot. In this case we must return to the Gulph, and the season being too severe to keep in a northern latitude, we must steer for Barbadoes." *The Diary of Mrs. John Graves Simcoe* (Toronto, 1911), p. 46.

³⁷ An examination of the papers in the Canadian Archives has failed to throw any light on the subject of these "tours". Apparently the letter spoken of has not been preserved. A letter of Levi Allen to his wife, an extract from which is printed in the *Vermont Historical Magazine*, I. 573, is dated Savannah, November 29, 1790.

³⁸ Ethan Allen died February 13, 1789.

³⁹ Moses Robinson was elected governor October 9, 1789.

on goods through Canada as those that come up the Hudson River; which customs house soon after built will probably suffer desolution by accidental fire as there are many very careless people in Vermont, who often set the woods on fire to facilitate catching their game.⁴⁰ Since the passing of the aforesaid decrees in Congress there has been no stated session of the general assembly of Vermont (nor any special one called that I have any information of) till the meeting of the general assembly which shall be on the second Teusday of October next; before which time I will be there (the King of Terrors only shall prevent) and make no doubt that the Profer of Congress will be rejected by the Legislature of Vermont. Vermont have annually for many years chosen three representatives for Congress, but they never attended. As to the Proclamation given out by Governor Chittenden to the inhabitants of Alburg to convene for the purpose of choosing town office, etc., it is a matter that the law directs on organizing a new town, which is the case with Alburg.⁴¹ As to that part which mentions to choose some proper person to represent them in Congress, I cannot positively see what necessity there was for it, but it may be a form of word used upon those occasions, as all the original parts of Vermont have for some time and do still vote for members of Congress, as before observed. Whatever is done or is doing in Vermont I shall give you the minutest information of, after my arrival there, and if matters work as I firmly believe, and most sincerely wish, for the good of Great Britain, Canada, and Vermont, shall Probably be here again in a very short time and be able to silense the little invectives privately and liberally thrown out against Vermont.

I will venture to say that the People of Vermont have not the most distant idea of allowing the State of New York to hold the lands lying between Lake Champlain and Lake Ontario, as those lands were included in the grant made to New Hampshire more than a century ago. As there is a considerable party in Vermont who adhere strictly to the Principles and Doctrines of the Church of England, I could Politically as well as religiously wish that they might be encouraged, and if Government send out a Bishop to Canada he may have liberty to exercise his functions in Vermont,⁴² and if he be an unbigoted sociable man, he may assist in the cement necessary between Canada and Vermont, and I have reason to believe the latter will appropriate lands for his support, as they have 360 acres in every six miles square in Vermont already granted to the glebe of the Church of England, and the same amount

⁴⁰ Act for admission approved February 18, 1791; for three representatives, February 25; for custom-house at Alburgh, act of March 2, 1791, ch. 12, sec. 8. Alburgh lay south of 45°, but was on land claimed under British authority as Caldwell's Manor, and was within the district of the British military posts at Dutchman's Point in North Hero, Vt., and Pointe au Fer, N. Y.; but this was not known to Congress when it established the Vermont port of entry there. Letter of Buckenidge, St. John's, May 8, 1791, Can. Arch., Q. 50: 146, and information from "a member of the Senate" (plainly Rufus King) in *Report* for 1890, first part, p. 171.

⁴¹ For the history of the resulting disturbances, see *Vermont Records*, IV, 454-478.

⁴² Dr. Charles Inglis, the first colonial bishop of the Anglican church, was consecrated bishop of Nova Scotia in 1787, with jurisdiction extending over Canada. Though the appointment of a bishop of Quebec was under consideration in this year 1791, as the next document shows, the first bishop of that diocese, Dr. Jacob Mountain, was not consecrated till 1793.

granted to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts.⁴³

This much on the supposition that Vermont has not joined the federal Union, and as to the other supposition, that they have joined, I do not chose to intrude upon your time by writing on so disagreeable and improbable a subject.

You shall hear from me the truth the first Opportunity after my arrival in Vermont.

I have the honor to subscribe myself in behalf of Vermont,
Sir, your most obedient and most humble servant,

LEVI ALLEN

IV. EXTRACT OF LETTER FROM SIMCOE TO DUNDAS, LONDON, AUGUST 12, 1791.⁴⁴

I beg to offer you the Copies of three Letters, the one from the late General of Vermont, Ethan Allen,⁴⁵ is now in my possession. In it, Sir, you will find the substance of the Politicks which I have adopted relative to Vermont. When Sir H. Clinton intrusted me with his plan of operations which were prevented by the Death of Major André, I was directed to make myself master by every inquiry within my power of the nature of the Ground, and the Inhabitants in the vicinity of the Upper Posts of Hudson's River. From that moment to the present Hour I have been convinced of the importance of Vermont, and the real good intentions of its Leaders to this Country. I think they may be of the utmost utility in the present critical moment.

Another letter is to me from Elijah Clarke, a General of Georgia, and who can neither write nor read. He took Augusta from us in the last war. The third is from that active adventurer, Bowles. He had served when a boy under my command. I inculcated to him peace, and to settle a Boundary; and a system of colonization which I thought practicable and might eventually be of great utility to this Country. You will perceive, to my surprize, he talks of visiting me in Upper Canada.⁴⁶

⁴³ The foundation for this statement lies in the fact that, in each of a large number of townships granted in Vermont by Governor Benning Wentworth of New Hampshire, one allotment had been set aside "as a glebe for the Church of England as by law established", while another had been assigned to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (and another to the first settled minister personally). But an act of 1787 had authorized the selectmen of each such town, save in the case of the few Episcopal ministers then actually officiating, to use the lands for the town. Subsequent state legislation, of 1794 and 1805, and a decision of the United States Supreme Court in 1815 (*Pawlet v. Clark*, 9 Cranch 292) diverted the glebes entirely to secular uses; but the Society's lands were secured to it in 1823, against similar legislation, by the decision of the same court in the *Society v. New Haven*, 8 Wheaton 464. See also [Batchelder and Bailey], *The Documentary History of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Vermont* (New York, 1870), *passim*.

⁴⁴ Can. Arch., Q. 278: 283. The rest of the letter is irrelevant to the immediate subject of the part quoted. It will be found calendared in the *Report on the Canadian Archives for 1891*, Upper Canada, p. 3.

⁴⁵ This letter is not found as an enclosure. Neither have the other two documents mentioned below been found. As to Elijah Clarke, see the introduction and note 19, above. The item respecting William Augustus Bowles is a new contribution to the life of that picturesque adventurer.

⁴⁶ As to William Augustus Bowles (1763-1807), see *American Historical Review*, VIII, 708, 726-734, where are letters from him showing his presence in London in January, 1791. His presence there in that year is also shown in *Authentic*

V. REV. SAMUEL PETERS TO GRENVILLE, PIMLICO, NOVEMBER 19, 1791.⁴⁷

PIMLICO, Novembr. 19th, 1791.

My Lord—

Last evening I received a Letter from Levi Allen Esqr. dated at Boston New England the 15th of October 1791, which says, "this day at 12 O'Clock at Noon I arrived here in a small sloop from Halifax and to morrow morning I shall set off on Horseback to execute the Business I have much at Heart". Mr. Allen adds, "I was charged four Guineas duty at Falmouth; and twenty eight Guineas for my passage in the Grantham Packet to Halifax which with other Expenses on the Road from London to Falmouth and from Halifax to Boston, exhausted nearly all my Cash, whereupon I called on Dr. A. A. Peters of this Town,⁴⁸ and gave him the signal of *Lewis Alden* and the Dr. Advanced me one hundred Pounds Sterling for *Lewis Alden's* Bill on you. If I carry the two points in full Expectation, I shall not mind my Expenses and Labours".

By various Letters from the States of America I have Information, that Emigration and discontent still prevail, and my friends wish to know by next January whether I am to go out Bishop of Canada, as February and March are the months for moving their families on the snow and Ice.⁴⁹

My Lord,

I am with honour and esteem,
your Lordships
most obedient and most humble Servt.

SAMUEL PETERS.

Right Honble. Lord Grenville.

VI. LEVI ALLEN TO [DUNDAS], VERMONT, UNION RIVER, NOVEMBER 27, 1791.⁵⁰

Sir

As the Courier from Canada from [for?] New York is Put in here in a gale of wind, I take the liberty (tho' out of the channel proposed through Governor Simcoe) to write you as the same will come sooner to hand.

Memoirs of William Augustus Bowles, Esquire, Ambassador from the United Nations of Creeks and Cherokees to the Court of London (London, 1791), and in the *Canadian Archive Report*, for 1890, second part, p. 285. Bowles and his party visited Quebec on the way, in July, 1790. See *ibid.*, pp. xlii, 154-156 of first part, 255-256 of second part.

⁴⁷ Public Record Office, C. O. 42:88; Can. Arch., Q. 57:176. Dr. Samuel Peters (1735-1826), the celebrated Tory parson and writer of Connecticut history, was now living in London on a government pension of £200 per annum. P. R. O., Treas. 50:7. The letter is endorsed as received the same day and transmitted to Dundas in Lord Grenville's note of the same date.

⁴⁸ Apparently Dr. Alexander Peters, a physician in Boston at this time.

⁴⁹ Simcoe, in a letter to Dundas, London, June 2, 1791, declaring it indispensable that a bishop should be appointed for Upper Canada, states that he has recommended Mr. Peters, late of Connecticut, as a proper person. Can. Arch., Q. 278:228. In 1794 an irregular convention of Vermont Episcopals elected him bishop of Vermont, and he accepted the election, but was never consecrated. See *Doc. Hist. of the Prot. Episc. Ch. in Vt.*, pp. 25-46.

⁵⁰ Can. Arch., Q. 54:721, and P. R. O., C. O. 42:85. In Can. Arch., Q. 57:194, and P. R. O., C. O. 42:88, there is a letter of the same purport to Dr. Peters, signed "Lewis Alden" and dated at Alburgh, on the same day, November 27.

I sailed on the Grantham, Capt. Bull the 11th of September arrived at Halifax in 27 days, the next morn. took a Passage in a little fishing sloop for Boston, where I arrived the sixth day, bot a horse and sadle, etc., and in three days rode to Windsor in Vermont where the Legislature of Vermont had a few days previously met, and much to my great mortification [found] that there had been an adjourned session between Oct. session 1790 and Oct. 1791, also a convention of deputies from each town, Previous to said adjourned session, in which Vermont had fully joined the United States.⁵¹ I remained at the General Assembly to the close thereof, twenty-one days. I think I may affirm without arrogance that if I had got up the River St. Lawrence last year with the well-chosen assortment of goods, Vermont would not have joined Congress, in fact a majority of both Houses now confess they are sorry, and feel themselves much hurt on hearing many advantages that would have accrued to Vermont if they had remained Independent, and at the same time on the other hand I made an estimate of the Probable Duties Vermont would be obliged to pay annually, which had not been before properly stated. I made no mention of anything, only my own opinion and what I had found would have been done in the course of negotiating the commerce of Vermont.

The facts are a number wanted to go to Congress, and tho' but four can go, yet 44, at least, expected to be appointed. Ethan Allen being dead, and Ira Allen was silent on account of the land he owned, and Caldwell first claimed,⁵² that Governor Chittenden thought it unpopular to oppose the current, so that poor Vermont had not a man of any considerable consequence to say a word for her real interest.

I shall in the course of the insuing winter go into the back parts of Georgia, visit General Clark,⁵³ and communicate every information to Governor Simcoe that may be advisable to him. The puff of wind being abated the courier will not wait, nor give me time to write this out fairly.

I am Sir, your faithful Humble Servant,

LEVI ALLEN.

⁵¹ Assembly session of January 10-27, 1791; convention of January 6-10.

⁵² Caldwell's Manor, a tract near 45° N. lat. and including Alburgh, claimed by Caldwell under grant from the Canadian government, and, in part, by Ira Allen under grant from that of Vermont.

⁵³ Elijah Clarke.



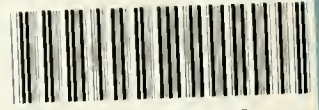
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